(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the details of the efforts made and achievements attained to ensure remunerative prices to the farmers for their crops, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) The National Commission on Farmers has made recommendations to improve the economic viability of farming by substantially improving the net income of farmers. Based on the recommendations of the National Commission on Farmers the National Policy for Farmers, has been formulated which is under consideration of the Government. There is, however, no proposal to constitute a commission to ensure minimum income to the farmers to check farmers' suicides.

Agricultural extension schemes

1383. SHRIMATI SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have got any plan to take up Agricultural Extension Schemes for the different States in order to increase production;

(b) whether Government will provide funds to the States for implementing Agricultural Extension Schemes;

(c) if so, whether such schemes would be introduced in Assam; and

(d) the details of the allocation of funds for the said schemes for Assam?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) Department of Agriculture & Cooperation, Government of India had launched a Centrally Sponsored Scheme "Support to State Extension Programmes for Extension Reforms" in May, 2005 based on Agriculture Technology Management Agency (ATMA) model for promoting farmer friendly extension system.

(b) The resources required for the scheme are shared between the Centre and the State in the ratio of 90:10. Budget estimates of Rs. 230.00 crore has been approved for implementing the scheme for the year 2007-08.

(c) The scheme is under implementation in 12 districts of Assam namely-Bongaigaon, Cachar, Darrang, Golaghat, Goalpara, Kokrajhar, Karimganj, Lakhimpur, Morigaon, NC Hills, Sivasagar, Tinsukia. Eleven districts of the State namely-Barpeta, Dhubri, Dibrugarh, Hallakandi, Jorhat, Kamrup, Karbi-Anglong, Nalbari, Nowgong, Sonitpur and Dhemaji are having similar facility under Assam Agriculture Competitiveness Project, a World Bank funded project.

(d) The funds under the scheme are released to the States on the basis of approved State Extension Work Plan (SEWP), Performance Report and submission of Utilization Certificate (U.C.), etc.

The year-wise Size of SEWP and releases made to Assam are given as under:

(Rs. in Lakhs)

Year	Size of SEWP	Release
2005-06	344.40	160.00
2006-07	521.92	Nil
2007-08	1333.60	Nil

Funds could not be released to the State during 2006-07 for want of their performance Report and U.C. Release of funds during 2007-08 is also held up for want of audited U.C. from the State for the funds utilized during 2005-06.

Fall in cane price

1384. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the fall in the price of cane would be a perennial problem for the farmers, the industry and all the stakeholders including the Govemments at the State-level;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the measures being taken to improve the condition of cane farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) The Central Government fixes, for each sugar season, the Statutory Minimum Price (SMP) of sugarcane payable by the sugar mills to the cane growers for the sugarcane supplied by them and there has been no fall in SMP of sugarcane as indicated below:

(Rs./quintal)

Sugar Season	SMP	Recovery level	Increase/Decrease in SMP
2005-06	79.50	9%	–
2006-07	80.25	9%	0.75
2007-08	81.18	9%	0.93

(c) In order to help the sugar industry to clear the cane price arrears of sugarcane farmers, the Central Government has taken the following steps:—

(i) A buffer stock of 20 lac tonnes has already been created for a period of one year from 01.05.2007 to 30.04.2008. An additional buffer stock of 30 lac tonnes has also been created for a period of one year from 1.8.2007 to 31.7.2008. Creation of 50 lac tonnes of buffer stock would involve a subsidy amount of Rs. 945 crore (approximately) to be borne from Sugar Development Fund. The banks would also provide